

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A composite product, comprising:

a transparent substrate;

a multilayer system comprising a functional layer and a layer C; and

a cover layer;

wherein:

the multilayer system has a solar-control function or an energy-control function;

the functional layer reflects at least some radiation of the solar spectrum;

the layer C comprises silicon or aluminum [nitride, carbonitride, oxynitride or oxycarbonitride], or a mixture of the two;

the layer C is surmounted by the cover layer; and

~~the cover layer is an oxide-based mechanical protection layer, the oxide being optionally oxygen-substoichiometric or oxygen-superstoichiometric and/or optionally nitrided; and~~

~~the cover layer comprises at least one of:~~

~~(i) — at least one titanium oxide comprising another metal M given by the formula $TiM_pO_xN_y$ where y may be zero;~~

~~(ii) — at least one mixed oxide comprising Zn and at least one other element, the at least one mixed oxide optionally being doped with a further at least one element chosen from Al, Ga, In, B, Y, La, Ge, Si, P, As, Sb, Bi, Ce, Ti, Zr, Nb, Ta and Hf; and~~

~~(iii) — comprises at least one oxide comprising Zr and at least one other metal.~~

Claims 2-6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the cover layer comprises ~~the at least one oxide (ii), the at least one oxide (ii) being~~ a mixed oxide comprising ~~zinc and tin (ZnSnO_x), zinc and titanium (ZnTiO_x), or zinc and zirconium (ZnZrO_x).~~

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein ~~the cover layer comprises the at least one oxide (ii), the at least one oxide (ii) being~~ is doped with at least one other element chosen from Al, Ga, In, B, Y, La, Ge, Si, P, As, Sb, Ce, Ti, Zr, Nb, Hf and Ta.

Claims 9-11 (Cancelled).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the ~~oxide~~ cover layer has a thickness of about 15 nm or less.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the layer C further comprises at least one ~~other~~ additional metallic element.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the layer C has a thickness of from about 5 to about 60 nm.

Claim 15 (Cancelled).

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the functional layer comprises at least one metallic or metal-nitride-based layer.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The composite product according to claim 1, comprising a dielectric final sequence of layers including oxide/silicon nitride/oxide.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The composite product according to claim 1, comprising the following sequence:

Si₃N₄/ZnO/Ag/ZnO/Si₃N₄/cover layer

or Si₃N₄/ZnO/Ag/ZnO/Si₃N₄/ZnO/Ag/ZnO/Si₃N₄/cover layer

optionally with a metal blocking layer in contact with at least one of the silver layers.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The composite product according to claim 1, wherein the composite product substantially preserves its properties after a heat treatment.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): A glazing assembly, comprising the composite product of claim 1.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A process for improving mechanical resistance of a transparent substrate, comprising applying a multilayer system comprising a functional layer and a layer C, and a cover layer to the transparent substrate;

wherein:

the multilayer system has a solar-control function or an energy-control function;

the functional layer reflects at least some radiation of the solar spectrum;

the layer C comprises silicon or aluminum [nitride, carbonitride, oxynitride or oxycarbonitride], or a mixture of the two;

the layer C is surmounted by the cover layer; and

~~the cover layer is an oxide-based mechanical protection layer, the oxide being optionally oxygen-substoichiometric or oxygen-superstoichiometric and/or optionally nitrided; and~~

~~the cover layer comprises at least one of:~~

- ~~(i) — at least one titanium oxide comprising another metal M given by the formula $TiM_pO_xN_y$ where y may be zero;~~
- ~~(ii) — at least one mixed oxide comprising Zn and at least one other element, the at least one mixed oxide optionally being doped with a further at least one element chosen from Al, Ga, In, B, Y, La, Ge, Si, P, As, Sb, Bi, Ce, Ti, Zr, Nb, Ta and Hf; and~~
- ~~(iii) — comprises at least one oxide containing Zr and at least one other metal.~~

Claim 22 (Cancelled).

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 21, wherein ~~the cover layer comprises the at least one oxide (ii), the at least one oxide (ii) being~~ is a mixed oxide comprising zinc and tin ($ZnSnO_x$), zinc and titanium ($ZnTiO_x$), or zinc and zirconium ($ZnZrO_x$).

Claim 24 (Cancelled).